

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6333
ANSWERED ON:08.05.2002
IMPACT OF GUJARAT VIOLENCE ON INDIA'S IMAGE
JAGMEET SINGH BRAR

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the long spell of communal violence in Gujarat has blurred the secular image of India in the eyes of foreign countries particularly Muslim countries;
- (b) if so, the details of international comments/remarks received by the Government in this regard;
- (c) whether it is also a fact that Indonesia has turned down India's offer for an agreement on Joint Working Group to fight terrorism;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the diplomatic initiative taken to convince foreign countries about the safety of minorities and the success achieved in the matter?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH)

- (a) & (b) A high degree of public interest and concern has been expressed internationally about the recent violence in Gujarat. Such comment, including comment in Islamic countries, has tended to focus on violence against the minority community in Gujarat and on the threat posed to the secular foundations of the Indian Republic by such violence.
- (c) & (d) There is no proposal made by the Government of India to the Government of Indonesia to set up a Joint Working Group to fight terrorism. The issue of terrorism is already on the agenda of India's bilateral interaction with Indonesia.
- (e) Government and its Missions abroad have taken proactive measures to project the efforts to restore law and order in the affected areas and steps taken to provide relief in a fair and non-discriminatory manner to the victims of this violence. Representatives of Indian Missions abroad have been in contact with Parliamentarians and opinion-makers to explain the facts of the situation and to emphasize the fact of India's resilience in dealing with such aberrations. In all this, the endeavour has been to emphasize India's rich and composite culture and its enduring secular traditions. Various countries have expressed their awareness and understanding of the efforts made by Government in this regard.